

which in the early 1990s worked in Central and Eastern Europe, offering technical assistance to the parliaments emerging from communist rule; and then for the last 6 years to the House Democracy Partnership.

So we are happy to join today in thanking Dan Mulhollan for all these years of work on behalf of the Congress and particularly for the kind of support that he has offered our international partnerships.

Dan knows a lot about Congress and has a profound respect for the institution. He has brought a particular sense of mission to the work of our commissions. As a political scientist, he recognizes how critical legislative research is to the growth of democracy, first in post-Communist Europe and now to all kinds of emerging democracies around the world.

I had the privilege of traveling last year with Dan to Warsaw to observe the 20th anniversary of that earlier task force's work. I can assure my colleagues he received a hero's welcome. His work has not gone unnoticed, and it is not going to go unnoticed by us either.

We want to salute Dan Mulhollan for his many, many years of distinguished service. We want to thank him for all that he has done, and we want to wish him well in his retirement and offer him our sincere gratitude and praise for a job well done.

HONORING THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF EDGAR HAGOPIAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. McCOTTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the extraordinary life of Edgar Hagopian and to mourn his passing at the age of 80.

Born on August 16, 1930, to Haroutun and Cariana Hagopian, Edgar dedicated his life to serving our community and our country. He was an exemplary citizen with an incredible work ethic who held an absolute love for his ancestral Armenia.

After graduating from Detroit's Cass Tech High School in 1948, Edgar studied at the University of Michigan and valiantly served in the United States Army during the Korean war. After being honorably discharged on December 7, 1954, Technical Sergeant Hagopian joined his father's business, where he had frequently worked since childhood.

Thus began a long and storied career, establishing himself not only as a successful entrepreneur but as an ardent advocate and activist for our community and Armenian causes.

Edgar served on the board of directors of the Armenian Assembly of America, the board of governors of the Michigan Design Center, the Detroit chapter of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, and the Michigan chapter of the Seeds of Peace. He was

an associate in the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts, and was involved with the Armenian Library. Edgar also founded the Detroit chapter of the Armenian American Business Council.

Edgar was named "Man of the Year" by the Canadian Armenian Business Council in 1995. In 2002, he was inducted into the International Institute Heritage Hall of Fame, and Edgar was awarded the 2005 Ellis Island Medal of Honor. This prestigious award was created to honor ancestral groups who, through struggle, sacrifice, and success, helped build this great Nation.

Edgar Hagopian deeply loved his community, and his community loved him. Always mindful of his humble roots, Edgar always endeavored to better our world. He was a mentor to many and an avid patron of the arts. A pensive philanthropist, Edgar led Hagopian Companies to donate in excess of \$70 million in goods and services to local charities.

Sadly, on March 27, 2011, Edgar passed from this earthly world to his eternal reward. He is survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Sarah, and his children Suzanne, Edmond, and Angela. Yet Edgar's legacy will continue in the lives of his grandsons Alexander, Adam, and Nicholas. As he joins his brother Arthur in eternity, Edgar is also survived by sisters Mary and Ilene and his brother Steve.

Mr. Speaker, Edgar Hagopian will be long remembered as a compassionate father, a dedicated husband, a passionate champion of Armenian causes, a philanthropist, a community leader, and above all, as a friend. Edgar was a man who deeply treasured his family, friends, community, and his country.

Today, as we bid Edgar Hagopian farewell, I ask my colleagues to join me in mourning his passing and in honoring his unwavering patriotism and legendary service to our community and our country.

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I would also ask us to reflect on what is perhaps the most poignant part of Edgar's legacy: We are not enriched by what we do for ourselves but by what we do for others within the short span of time God grants. Truly, Edgar Hagopian used the time he was given to leave us all better off; and now, in honor of him, let us return the favor to our fellow human beings.

THE FAIRNESS IN TAXATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a grave threat to both our economy and our democracy, and that is the disappearing middle class.

Over the last 30 years, there has been a dramatic and deliberate transfer of wealth from the middle class to the

very, very, very rich. Income inequality is now at the highest level since 1928. Wages have stagnated for middle and working class families despite enormous gains in productivity. Where has the money gone?

This chart shows the change in the average pre-tax household income from 1979 to 2005. The bottom 20 percent—that's that number way down in the corner—of households saw their incomes over those 30 years grow just \$200. Over the same period, the top 0.1 percent saw income growth of nearly \$6 million each year. The top 100th of 1 percent now makes an average of \$27 million per household per year. The average income for the bottom 90 percent of Americans: \$31,244.

Meanwhile, Republicans, who squandered a budget surplus, created a huge deficit with unpaid-for tax cuts that went mainly to the very rich, and whose policies allowed Wall Street recklessness to bring our economy to near collapse, are now demanding that the middle class foot the bill. Their solution to our fiscal mess is to gut vital programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and to make cuts in domestic spending that would cause an additional 700,000 middle class Americans to lose their jobs.

In the next chart, you can see some of the enormous cuts that they are proposing: \$1.3 billion from community health centers, the only source of medical care for many families; \$5.7 billion from Pell grants, reducing the size of the grant for 9.4 million students who want to go to college; and \$1 billion in funding for high-speed rail, important infrastructure projects that will create good jobs—thousands and thousands of good jobs.

Once again, they are showing their utter disregard for the shrinking middle class and those who aspire to it by cutting important jobs programs and assistance programs for poor families.

Part two of the Republican program for addressing our economic problem, and every other problem, is to cut taxes even more for the rich. Enough is enough. It's time for millionaires and billionaires to pay their fair share. This isn't about punishment and it isn't about revenge. It is about fairness.

Currently, the top tax bracket starts at \$375,000, failing to distinguish between the well-off and billionaires. I have introduced the Fairness in Taxation Act, which would create new tax brackets beginning at 45 percent for income over \$1 million, rising to 49 percent for income of \$1 billion a year or more; and, yes, there are people in our country who made \$1 billion or more just last year. Historically, these rates are relatively modest. During most of the Reagan administration, the top tax rate was 50 percent; and in previous decades, the top tax rate was as high as 94 percent.

My bill would also address a fundamental inequality in our current law by taxing capital gains and dividends